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A
COLLECTION of PAPERS,
Concerning the
CONVOCATION.

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CONVOCATION

K. Canterbury. A

Province of Convocation.

COLLECTION

OF

PAPERS,

CONCERNING

What hath been Transacted

IN THE

CONVOCAATION,

SUMMON'D A. D. 1702. And DISSOLV'D 1705.

London, Printed, and Sold by J. Nut near Stationer's-
Hall. 1705.

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CONVOCAATION

Session of the Year 1755. And Dissolved 1756.

London, Printed, and Sold by J. W. near St. Dunstons.

1755.

A
COLLECTION
OF
PAPERS, &c.

Numb. I. November 21. 1702.

The Humble Application of the Lower House of Convocation, to his Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and their Lordships his Suffragans in Convocation, Assembled.

WHereas in the Two late Convocations, many Differences have arisen between the two Houses, concerning the manner of Synodical Proceeding; and principally concerning the Right then Humbly Claim'd by the Lower House, of Holding and Continuing their Assemblies in the Intervals of the ordinary Prorogations and Continuations of the Convocation, made in the Upper; which Principal Difference, as well as the other lesser and dependent, remains yet undecided, to the hindrance of the Intention and Business of such Convocations, and to the great Disturbance of the Order and Peace of this Provincial Church: And whereas we find, that the Course, which after other Endeavours, was heretofore proposed

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posed by the Lower House, of Adjusting the Matters in Dispute by a Verbal Conference, was not thought fit to be condescended to your Lordships, but became it self the Subject of a new Question.

We therefore the Clergy of the Lower House of the Present Convocation, out of our earnest Desire to have all such Disputes at last compos'd and ended, do make this our first and most humble Request, that your Lordships would again take the Questions in Dispute into your Wise and Paternal Consideration; especially, that concerning the Right of the Lower House before express'd, and would be pleas'd to Suggest to us some such Method, whereby that Controversy at least, on which, as we conceive, the Being of the Lower House subsists, may come to a speedy and final Determination.

The Answer to this Paper, see Numb. II.

Numb. II. *November 13. 1702.*

The Answer of the Archbishop and Bishops to the Humble Application of the Lower House of Convocation.

WE are desirous, as much as in us lies, to put an end to all Differences, and to preserve a good Understanding between Us and You.

As to the Point of Proroguing the whole Convocation by the Archbishop, with the Consent of his Suffragans, that is a Right which we are in Possession of, and it has been deriv'd to us from our Predecessors.

And in Fact, we find it was so far from Destroying the Being of former Convocations, that in them, Business of the greatest Importance has been Transacted, and brought to a happy Conclusion.

In the Exercise of this Right, you may assure your selves that by God's Blessing all such Methods will be used by us, as after the most Impartial Examination shall appear most conducing to Unity, and to the true ends of an *English* Convocation, and of this in particular.

To

To this purpose we have appointed a Committee of seven Bishops to consider of such Methods, and to meet with some of your Body, not exceeding Fourteen, on the Fourteenth Instant, being *Saturday*, in the *Organ-Room*, at Ten in the Morning, to offer and receive what may contribute to these ends.

Numb. III. *November 14. 1702.*

A Paper from the Upper House without a Title, Read and Delivered to the Committee of the Lower.

1. **T**HAT the Lower House may meet in Committees to prepare Business between the Synodical Prorogations.

2. That when Business shall be before the Convocation, the Archbishop, with the Consent of his Suffragans, will so Order the Prorogations, that there shall be sufficient and convenient time allow'd for the considering and finishing of it.

Numb. IV. *November 18. 1702.*

The Reply of the Lower House of Convocation, to the Two Papers they have lately receiv'd in Answer to their Humble Application.

Your Lordships Inclinations to Peace, mention'd in your first Paper, we hope we have given you no just occasion to think we ever Distrusted: Nor did we ever question his Grace's Power, especially as he now claims it with the Consent of his Suffragans, to Prorogue the whole Convocation; that is, to appoint a farther Day, on which the whole Body should attend: Nor could we imagine that such a Power was destructive of the Being of a Convocation.

But we humbly conceive that such a Power is no way inconsistent with the Right claim'd by the Lower House in their humble Application; to wit, the Right of holding their Assemblies, and continuing to Act as a House in the Intervals of his Grace's ordinary Prorogations.

Which Right, in our humble Opinion, is so Indispensably necessary to the Being of the Lower House of Convocation (for of our own House only we spoke, and hop'd to have been understood) and has been also of late so openly opposed, and with so much pretence of Authority deny'd, that we think we cannot Answer the Trust reposed in us, unless we continue to insist upon the Claim of it, and use our utmost Endeavours to bring this Question to a speedy and final Determination.

A Method of doing this, is what your Lordships in your last Paper seem wholly to decline, tho' it be the thing we chiefly and plainly aim'd at in our humble Application. And therefore we cannot but again make our humble Request, that your Lordships will be pleased to offer something more effectual to the purpose we intended.

The Answer to this Paper, see Numb. VI.

Numb. V. *November 18, 21. 1702.*

Among the Votes of the Honourable House of Commons we found as follows.

Mercurij 18 Novembris. 1702.

Order'd, That Mr. Attorney General do Prosecute Mr. Lloyd, the Lord Bishop of Worcester's Son, for his said Offences, after his Privilege as a Member of the Lower House of Convocation is out. Whereupon

By the Lower House of Convocation, Die Veneris
November 20. 1702.

Order'd, That the Prolocutor, the Dean of Canterbury, Archdeacon Ottley, and Mr. Moor, do attend Mr. Speaker
of

of the Honourable House of Commons, and return our Humble Thanks to him, and to that most Honourable House, for the great Favour to the Church and Convocation. which they have on all Occasions been pleased to Express: And particularly for the late Regard, which they of themselves, without suggestion, or sollicitation, were pleased to have to the Privilege of this House, in the Case of one of our Members, who had the Misfortune to fall under their Displeasure.

This was Read to Mr. Speaker at his House Nov. 21. and the same Day in the Honourable House of Commons.

Resolved, That this House will on all Occasions Assert the Just Rights and Privileges of the Lower House of Convocation.

Numb. VI. November 22. 1705.

The Answer of the Archbishop and Bishops of the Paper brought up by the Prolocutor from the Lower House, upon November 18. 1702.

WE wish that the Proposals we sent you for the due Ordering of the Proceedings of both Houses of Convocation, had satisfy'd you, as they did us, because we thought that in them we had offered you what was sufficient toward the ending of the Differences that have been between us.

We cannot depart from the Archbishop's Right of Proroguing the whole Convocation of the Upper and Lower House, with the Consent of the Suffragans, according to the constant usage, as it it appears in our Act-Books.

This Right you allow in general Terms, while you own that the Archbishop's Prorogation is the appointing a farther Day on which the whole Body shall meet: But you should do well to take notice, that by the same Act, by which the Convocation is Prorogu'd, the whole Business of the Convocation is likewise continued in the State it is then in; so that farther Day of the next Session.

And

And the Right you Claim of continuing to Act as a House between the Days of the Archbishop's Prorogations, as indispensably necessary to the Being of the Lower House, does (as we conceive) by immediate Consequence overthrow what you had just before allow'd the Archbishop, whose Act cannot be said to Prorogue the whole Convocation, if a part of it do's notwithstanding remain in condition of Acting as a distinct House of Convocation.

Nor can we see how it should be necessary to the Being of the Lower House, to continue to Act as a House between the Days of the Archbishop's Prorogation, since all the Business of the Lower House in former Convocations, and particularly the part they had in Revising the Book of *Common-Prayer* in 1661, was manag'd by them, without any intermediate Actings, as a House.

The Premises being well weigh'd, we do not find how we can admit of your new Claim, since it would be plainly to recede from a Right that we have always enjoy'd.

We must therefore leave the Proposals we sent you to your farther consideration, not doubting but that the Provision therein made for the Exercise of the Rights of both Houses, will be very sufficient for the doing of any Business that is to be done in Convocation.

Numb. VII. December 2. 1702.

To the most Reverend the Archbishop, and the Right Reverend the Bishops in Convocation, Assembled.

The Humble Request and Proposal of the Lower House of Convocation.

YOur Grace and your Lordships in your last Paper, having again wav'd the making such a Proposal to us, as by our dutiful and repeated Applications we hop'd to have obtain'd; and choosing rather to enter into Argumentation, with which the World and We are already sufficiently tired, and which Method is in our humble Opinion endless: We believing also that your Lordships will not think it reasonable, as indeed we cannot, that either House should be Judge over the other in its own

own Cause; do therefore now at last crave leave in all Humility to make this our following Proposal.

That your Grace, and your Lordships will be pleased to permit us of the Lower House, to joyn with your Lordships in an humble Address to the Queen, praying, That Her Majesty out of Her tender Regard to the Peace and Good Order of the Church, would vouchsafe to take this Controversy into Her Princely Consideration, and appoint such Persons, as She, Her in high Wisdom shall Chooße to Hear, and finally Determine it.

The Answer to this Paper, see Numb. X.

Numb. VIII. December II. 1702.

To the most Reverend the Archbishop, and the Right Reverend the Bishops in Convocation, Assembled.

The Humble Address of the Lower House.

May it Please Your Grace and Your Lordships.

WE the Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation, having to our great Trouble found our selves Aspers'd both in Discourse and Writings, as if we were Ill-affected to the Metropolitcal and Episcopal Rights of your Grace, and your Lordships, have thought our selves Oblig'd to make and sign the Declaration here-under Written, and Humbly to lay it before your Lordships, with our most humble Request to your Lordships, that you will not give any Credit to such evil Suggestions, but discountenance all such Persons as shall be found to be the Authors and Spreaders of such infamous Reports and Libels. And that your Lordships would be pleas'd to Order, That this our Declaration may be enter'd upon your Lordships Books, there to remain as a Testimony of our Respect and Duty to your Lordships, and to the Sacred Order of Bishops.

Whereas the Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation have been by Discourses and Writings of several Persons, very Maliciously and Scandalously Mis-represented, as if they were favourers of Presbytery in opposition to Episcopacy, and were Enemies to the just Rights, Privileges, Prerogatives, and Jurisdiction of Bishops over Presbyters, as they are Establish'd by the Laws of God, and of this Land.

Now

Now least such perverse and wicked Mis-representations should make any impressions upon the Lords the Bishops, and thereby prejudice them against their Presbyters, or create any Jealousies and Distrust in any of those whom we Represent; or mislead such Persons, who are less acquainted with our Principles and Pretensions, to conceive a false and ill Opinion of us: We have thought it incumbent upon us to make this following Declaration, and each of us voluntarily and freely to sign the same; that it may remain upon our Books for our own just and necessary Vindication.

WE whose Names are under-written, Members of the Lower House of Convocation, do hereby declare, That we acknowledge the Order of Bishops, as Superior to Presbyters, to be of Divine Apostolical Institution. That we neither have done, nor will do any thing knowingly or designedly, that may be to the Prejudice of the Rights and Privileges that are given to the Archbishops and Bishops by the Constitution of this Church. That we are ready to pay all duty and respect to their Lordships, as of right we ought, and as becomes us with relation to their high Character and Station in the Church. That we do believe that none of us have claim'd, or do claim any other Rights and Privileges, than what they are fully perswaded were enjoyn'd by our Predecessors, and which they conceive to be necessary to the very Being of the Lower House of Convocation, and such as in their Opinion may be continued to it, without any the least Ineroachment upon the Rights of Episcopal Power and Jurisdiction.

The same Day this Additional Address was Presented.

THough the Scandals which extorted the Paper we have now deliver'd, might have justly and easily been despis'd by the Subscribers of it, whose Affections to the Established Church, and Zeal for your Lordships Order, are sufficiently known; yet they could not rest contented, without endeavouring to satisfy even the most unreasonable of their Calumniators.

But finding both by publick Report, and by the Objections made to them in their own House, that their well intended Declaration has been so unhappy, as instead of giving satisfaction, to occasion new Offence; and that from having been traduc'd for allowing too little to Episcopacy, they are now accused of ascribing too much to it, in the Clause which owns it of Divine Apostolical Institution, as if this were a Novel Doctrine, not sufficiently warranted by our Church. The

The Subscribers therefore have conceiv'd themselves again oblig'd to have Recourse to your Lordships for your Direction and Aid; and have moved the Lower House to pray your Lordships, as hereby we most humbly do, That in order to the perfect Settling of the Judgment, both of them, and of the rest of our Communion; and for the more sure Establishment of the Episcopal Order, your Lordships would think it worthy your particular Care, to take the aforesaid Doctrine into your mature Consideration.

And if it shall appear that the Subscribers have not erred concerning it, as from unquestionable Authorities, they humbly presume they have not; That your Lordships will be pleased (by what Declaration, or other Method shall to you seem fittest) to abett and support the true Doctrine, and to discourage and repress the contrary, whether *Arian* or *Erasian* Opinions.

To these two Papers see the Answer Numb. XII.

Numb. IX. December 11. 1702.

The Answer of the President of the Convocation, and his Suffragans, to the Proposal of the Lower House, brought up December 2. 1702.

WE sent down in our Proposals to you the best means we could think of, to put an end to that Argumentation, wherewith you now say you are tir'd. We are still of Opinion, that if you agree to those Proposals, they will be found to Answer sufficiently all the Ends of Business in the Convocation. And we cannot go beyond them, without manifest Injury to our Constitution, as an Episcopal Church.

We expected after these Concessions, wherein we departed so much from what in strictness might have been insisted on, to have found some advances towards Accommodation made on your part. But instead of that, in the Paper you last brought up to us, you seem to affect to express your selves in a manner that sets the two Houses upon such an Equality, as we judge inconsistent with the Episcopal Authority, and the Precedency of the Archbishop over the whole Convocation; and leads to such an Independency of Presbyters upon their Bishops, as the Clergy of the Lower House in former times never pretended to.

We are abundantly assured of her Majesty's most tender regard to the Peace, and good order of the Church, and are ve-

ry thankful to God, and to her Majesty for it. But we cannot think it proper to trouble her Majesty with this Controversy: Since we believe it unnecessary, after the Overtures we have already made, and which we cannot exceed, it being not in our power to part with any of those Rights with which we are Entrusted by the Constitution of our Church, and the Laws and Customs of the Realm.

Numb. X. December 15. 1702.

His Grace made the following Speech, and delivered a Copy of it to the Prolocutor.

Mr. Prolocutor,

Since you and your Brethren of the Lower House of Convocation, brought up your two last Papers, which were laid on the Table of this House, there have been other Papers brought up by diverse Members of your House, relating to the same matter with yours: Which being of great weight and moment, we have not thought fit to do any thing therein without mature deliberation, and good Advice: And for this there will be a convenient Season now in the Recess which we must necessarily make for the attending of our Ordination next Lord's Day, and the Holy time of *Christmas* soon after following. We shall therefore reserve this matter till we meet again.

The Paper refer'd to by his Grace in the foregoing Speech.

To the most Reverend Father in God, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and to the Right Reverend the Bishops of his Prowince, Assembled in Convocation.

Whereas there has been a Form of Declaration agreed upon by the Lower House of Convocation, to be Subscrib'd by such of the Members as should be willing to do it, which has since been Subscrib'd by several of them, and presented to your Grace and your Lordships, containing among other things this following Proposition: 'We acknowledge the Order of Bishops as Superior to Presbyters, to be of Divine Apostolical Institution, of the Legality of Passing which Declaration without a Royal License we have just Reason to doubt. And whereas, in an Additional Address presented at the same time with it, a suggestion is made, as if the Subscribers had been accus'd by some Members within the House, of ascribing too much to Episcopacy in the Clause above-mention'd: We think
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our selves bound to signify to your Grace, and your Lordships, that none of us, whose Names are under-written, did make any Objections against the Truth of the Doctrine contain'd in that Clause, but being justly apprehensive of the Danger of making any Declaration of this Nature in Convocation without a Royal License, some of us did Object against the Legality of Passing it; and we do now for our selves, and for all those by whom we are empower'd, protest that we have not in any wise consented to the making of the said Declaration, nor of the Additional Address wherein your Grace and your Lordships are pray'd to take the aforesaid Declaration, into your mature Consideration, in order to the perfect settling the Judgments of those of our Communion, and the more sure Establishment of the Episcopal Order. And we do further pray your Grace and your Lordships, that this our Dissent and Protestation may be admitted and enter'd into the Acts of your House.

We whose Names are under-written, do humbly pray your Grace and your Lordships, that all such other absent Members of the Lower House of Convocation, as shall be desirous hereafter to Subscribe the Protestation which we have now delivered, may have your Grace's and Lordships Permission, to Subscribe the same, when they shall offer themselves so to do.

Numb. XI. December 23. 1702.

To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, The Humble Petition of the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury.

Most Humbly sheweth,

THAT after a Ten Years Interruption of holding Convocations, there arose consequently (in that which was held in the year 1700) several Questions concerning the Rights and Liberties of the Lower House; and particularly and chiefly this; Whether the Ordinary Prorogations, and Continuations made by the Archbishop in the Upper House to a Day assign'd, did Suspend all Acting in the Lower House for the mean time?

That this Question among others having been first raised by the Upper House, and afterwards Stated and Debated in Papers between the two Houses interchangeably; the lower House humbly besought their Lordships to enter into a Verbal Conference, for the more free Discussion, and speedy Decision

of the Controversy: But this our humble Supplication was utterly rejected by their Lordships; and new difficulties Created, which cut off all our hopes of ending the Dispute in that Convocation.

That in the succeeding Convocation, the same Question still took place; and, notwithstanding our repeated Requests, we still found, we were not to hope for any regular Determination; but that it was expected, we should absolutely submit to their Lordships Judgment, though in their own Cause.

That in this Convocation begun in your Majesty's most happy Reign, the Lower House upon a Sense of the Inconveniences and Scandals caus'd by these Divisions, humbly apply'd to their Lordships, that since they had not Accepted our former Proposal of a Conference, they themselves would be pleased to Suggest some other Method of settling a Point so Fundamental, and confess'd on both sides to be of the utmost Importance.

The Intention of which Address being way'd by their Lordships, we renew'd our Solicitation; and again receiving a Declinatory Answer, found our selves Oblig'd to propose a Method of our own: And most humbly presuming on your Majesties great Condescension, made bold to move their Lordships, that they would permit us to joyn with them, in submitting this Difference to your Majesty's Determination: But this Method also has been Declin'd by their Lordships; they Alledging that it is not in their Power to part with that their (pretended) Right.

Now whereas the Right Claim'd by your Petitioners is of very great Consequence, as they humbly conceive; and is vested in them, as they are verily perswaded by the Constitution of our Church; of which they are ready to make full Proof, if permitted; and whereas they are inform'd that this Question is of such a Nature, that it cannot be brought before any of your Majesty's Courts of Law or Equity: Your Petitioners therefore are enforced to flie for Protection and Relief to your Sacred Majesty, and most humbly to Pray,

That your Majesty out of your Princely Inclination to preserve and secure the just Rights and Privileges of all your Subjects, and out of your most Gracious and Peculiar Regard to the Peace and good Order of the Church, would vouchsafe to call this Question into your Royal Audience; and to Direct such Examination and Determination of it, as your Majesty in your high Wisdom shall think fit.

*And your Petitioners, as in all Duty bound,
shall ever Pray, &c.*

It pleas'd her Majesty to return this most Gracious Answer.

I Will Consider of your Petition, and give you an Answer to it as soon as I can.

Numb. XII. January 20. 170²₃.

The Answer of the President of Convocation, and his Suffragans, to a Paper call'd the Humble Address of the Lower House. Jan. 20. 170²₃.

In the Preface to the Form of Ordination in our Church, we find the following Declaration.

IT is evident unto all Men, diligently Reading Holy Scripture, and Ancient Authors, that from the Apostles time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.

To this we have Subscrib'd, this we have Taught, and shall by God's Blessing continue to do so, against all opposers whatsoever.

But we conceive that without a Royal License, we have not Authority to Attempt, Enact, Promulge or Execute any Canon, Constitution, or Ordinance Provincial, by whatsoever Name it may be call'd, which shall concern either Doctrine or Discipline.

We have likewise understood that this is the Opinion of diverse very Learned Persons in the Lower House, who for that Reason could not joyn in the late Declaration, though upon all occasions they have given undeniable Proofs of a Dutiful and Conscientious regard to the Rights of Episcopacy.

However, we cannot but take due notice of your Expressions of great Zeal for our Order, and the Rights of it, and do hope that you will Act Agreeably hereunto in your future Proceedings.

Numb. XIII. February 11. 170²₃.

The Humble Reply of the Lower House of Convocation, to a Paper sent from the President of the Convocation, and his Suffragans. Jan. 20. 170²₃.

May it Please Your Lordships.

THE Lower House had just hopes, that the late Profession made by so great a Majority of them, of the venerable
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Esteem they have always had for your Sacred Order, would have been their sufficient Vindication from those injurious Aspersions, which the Intemperance of some pretended Zealots for the Archi-Episcopal Prerogative, had thrown upon them: And that your Lordships moreover would have thought it proper, and at this Time more especially seasonable, to own and recommend that Opinion which holds Episcopacy to be not of human Institution.

But to their great Wonder they find, that your Lordships upon this latter Article, with which you choose to begin, are pleas'd to express your selves with so much Caution, as by no means to satisfy the lower Clergy, that your Lordships do not dissent from them, even in this Point too.

They humbly conceive, that tho' your Lordships were restrain'd by the Statute of 25. H. 8. from giving them your Opinion concerning any Ordinance to be made; which yet does not appear, and your Lordships misrecite the Statute: Yet to declare your Sense concerning any Truth of Religion, speculatively only, and without requiring either Assent or Obedience, is not forbidden by that Act: So they are informed by Persons very learned in the Law. However it is not to be questioned, but your Lordships might without the least Suspicion of Danger have signified your sentiments in some such manner as not to have left them doubtful; either by avowing, concerning the Right of Episcopacy, as you seem to do concerning the Antiquity only, this *This you have taught, and shall by Gods Blessing continue so to do against all Opposers*, or at least by saying that in that Matter you did not differ from us in your private Opinions; which to say in our own House, one of those very learned Persons so highly applauded by your Lordships, was not afraid.

The said Majority of the lower House are likewise sorry, that the Scandalous Reflections made upon them by ignorant and malicious Men, of which they complain'd to your Lordships; are rather likely to be confirm'd and kept in Countenance by your Lordships Answer. Since it takes so cold Notice of a Declaration made by us with great Zeal, and in your Lordships Apprehension, with great Danger; and mentions your hopes concerning our *future Proceedings* in Words so like an Admonition, as if it were design'd to intimate, that our present Expressions of our Duty towards your Order were occasional only, and our past Behaviour had given just Ground for the Reproaches
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so liberally bestowed upon us. Whereas in Truth, the Character under which the generality of us most commonly lye, is (as your Lordships well know) very far from that extreme. And the Rights we humbly claim are no other than what are well consistent with the due subordination we profess; and which our Predecessors have (under your Lordships Predecessors) all along enjoy'd, of both which as we have often offer'd, we are still ready to make full Proof when the Question comes to be discuss'd before a competent Audience.

We therefore cannot but again recommend the Declaration made by the Subscribers, to your Lordships more mature Consideration: Humbly desiring that your Lordships will think fit, more freely to own a Truth which is the most proper foundation and best security of your sacred Order. And that you would not suffer the Reasons of those Persons to be of any Authority with you, who tho' distinguish'd by you here in a Character much to be envied, have in our humble Opinion rather deserv'd your Reproof, for the Irregularity of their separate Application.

Numb. 14. Decemb. 8. 1703.

To the most Reverend his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury, and the Right Reverend the Bishops his suffragans in Convocation Assembled.

May it please your Grace and your Lordships.

WE the Clergy of the lower House of Convocation being called together by Royal Authority, and your Grace's Archiepiscopal mandate to consult about such matters as concern the Safety, Advantage and Honour of this Church, do think our selves obliged, in the first Place above all things, to have all due regard, to the soundness of its Doctrine, and to labour some effectual Provision against its being corrupted and depraved; and therefore in all humble manner, we beg leave to remind your Lordships of the daring licentiousness of the Press, so often complain'd of, thro' which, there have for some Years last past, several Books been printed, publish'd and every where dispersed, in which not only the Worship and Discipline of the Church but the known Fundamentals of our Holy Religion have been impugn'd, the Mysteries of our Faith have been exposed, the Immortality of the Souls of Men

Men has been openly deny'd, and Principles utterly destructive of all Religion, whether natural or Revealed; have been maintain'd to the great Dishonour of God, the apparant hazard of many Souls, and the exceeding Scandal of this Church and Nation.

There are many other Things now lying before us, more especially relating to the Discipline of the Church, which we humbly conceive to be fit matter to be enquired into by a Convocation, as particularly, the many Clandestine Marriages which we daily hear of, as also the Scandal said to be given by Neglect, or Non-Observance of the Ecclesiastical Laws and Canons now in Force, in Regard to Commutations. But these things requiring some Time to deliberate upon and digest, we rather choose to lay this Complaint against Heretical and Atheistical Books before your Lordships by its self, than by too long a Silence to be thought not sufficiently sensible of the Mischief which attends the Church, by the Means of such audacious Writings. And in behalf of our selves and of the Clergy whom we represent, we do most earnestly beseech your Lordships to take this Matter into your most Serious and Paternal Consideration, not doubting but that thro' your great Wisdom and Interest with those, in whom a sufficient Power is lodg'd, to effect so good a Work, some speedy Remedy may be found, and a Stop put to so growing an Evil.

Numb. XV. The same Day.

To his Grace, &c.

WE the Clergy of the lower House of Convocation think our selves oblig'd humbly to lay before your Lordships, the manifold Inconveniencies, to which we are lyable for want of some more easy and effectual Method, than there is at present for the recovering Rates made for the Repair of Churches and Chappels. We do therefore make it our humble Request to your Lordships, that you would be pleased to consider, how far it may be proper for the two Houses of Convocation, to join in preparing such a Bill to be offered in Parliament, as may hereafter inforce the raising and collecting all such Rates in the easiest and speediest manner, consistent with the ancient Liberties of our Holy Church, and the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction.

Numb.

Numb. XVI. Febr. 170³₄

To the most Reverend the Lord Arch-Bishop of Canterbury his Grace, and the Right Reverend the Bishops his suffragans.

The humble Representation of the lower House of Convocation.

May it please your Grace and your Lordships.

HAVING received a Message from your Grace by our Prolocutor in the Session December 15, by which we were encouraged to hope, that against our next meeting with your Lordships on February 4. sufficient Power might be procured for the joint Dispatch of Synodical Business; we then thought it our Duty to employ several of our Members, in preparing on our Parts, during this long Recess of your Lordships, such Heads of Matters as being debated, and approv'd by us, might properly be offer'd, to your Lordships grave and Wise Consideration.

Accordingly we have duly weighed in our House the following Articles and do with all Humility represent to your Lordships.

That a general Neglect of diverse Canons and Constitutions now in Force doth (among other great Inconveniences thence arising) tend to introduce such Customs and Usages, as may in Time be interpreted to amount to a Prescription; and thereby the Authority and Force of the said may be evaded, the Clergy loose their undoubted Rights, and be involv'd in fruitless Contests and Law Suits with their Parishoners.

1. That matter of great Offence hath been Administred to pious Christians, and many Evil Consequences may arise from the Practise of such Ministers, who Read not the Common-Prayer Distinctly, Reverently, and Entirely (as by the Rubrick, and by the 14th Canon they are Oblig'd to do) without either Diminishing in regard of Preaching, or in any other respect, or Adding any thing in the Matter or form thereof.

2. That there hath been a great neglect of bringing such Infants, as have been privately Baptized in the Church; to the Intent that the Congregation may be certify'd thereof, and the Child be there receiv'd as one of the Flock of true Christian People; as the Rubrick directs. And that the unjustifiable Use of the Form of publick Baptism in private Houses hath lessen'd the Reverence due to that Holy Office: And in some places hath given Opportunity to Persons to Introduce into the Administration

of that Holy Sacrament; and occasion'd those undue Practices of mutilating the publick Form, and Baptizing without the Sign of the Cross, or God-fathers and God-mothers.

3. That the Remissness of Church-Wardens in not making such Provision for the Administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as the Rubrick and Canons direct, hath in sundry cases given matter of Offence to good Christians, and been the occasion of much Indecency in the Celebration of that Holy Sacrament.

4. That the Apostles Rule concerning Decency and Order in the Publick Worship of God, and the direction of our Church in the 18th Canon answerable to that Rule, are in several Churches of this Province notoriously violated, by the irreverent and disorderly behaviour of those persons who presume to *Cover their Heads in the Church in the time of Divine Service*; or do not in Kneeling, Standing, and other respects demean themselves in such manner as is by that Canon, and the Book of Common-Prayer requir'd; *Or by Walking or Talking, or other ways disturb the Service or Sermon, or without any other urgent or necessary cause, depart out of the Church during the time of the Service or Sermon.*

5. That notwithstanding the Exemplary Care of many Bishops in the Admission of Persons into Holy Orders (for which we have great reason to bless God, and to be thankful to their Lordships) yet to our Grief, in some Dioceses, the Conditions in that regard prescrib'd by the 33, 34, and 35th Canons have not been observ'd. On the contrary, the little caution used by some in Granting, and by others in allowing of Letters Testimonial; the not insisting on true, certain, and sufficient Titles; the want of a strict and diligent Examination of such as offer themselves to be Ordain'd; and an unnecessary Ordination of Persons without either University Degrees or Education, continue to be just matter of Complaint: And it were further to be wished, that the Ordination of Ministers might be always enter'd in the Publick Registers of their respective Dioceses, in so particular and Authentick a manner, as to afford sufficient Evidence for the detecting such Persons as forge Letters of Orders, and to provide against the Inconveniences which may arise to the Clergy upon any loss of their Letters of Orders, which hath some time happen'd.

6. That frequent Abuses have happen'd to the great Scandal of the Church, and the Jurisdiction thereof by the neglect of the 103 Canon, which Appoints, that before any License for the Celebration of Matrimony be granted, it shall appear to the Judge, *by the Oaths of two sufficient Witnesses (one of them to be known*

known to the Judge himself, or some other Person of good Reputation then present, and known likewise to the said Judge) that the express Consent or Parents (or Parent if one be Dead) or Guardians or Guardian of the Parties is thereunto had and obtain'd: As also by the Irregular Granting of Licences of Marriage contrary to the true Intent of the 102 Canon, which provides that, *One Condition of every Security taken upon Granting any Licence be, that Matrimony shall be Celebrated in the Parish Church or Chapel where one of the Parties dwelleth, and in no other place*; as likewise by the Practice of Ministers, who (contrary to the express Prohibition of the 62 Canon) do under any pretence whatsoever joyn any Persons in Marriage at any time, but only between the Hours of Eight and Twelve in the Morning, or in any place but in the Parish Church or Chapel, where one of them dwelleth; and moreover by the evil Custom of lodging blank Licences in improper hands. And we cannot but express our hearty Concern, that notwithstanding the Wise Provisions made by the Laws Ecclesiastical and Civil against Clandestine Marriages, there should still be found Persons being, or pretending to be in Holy Orders, who frequently transgress the said Laws, to the Dishonour of the Church, and the Ruine of many Families.

7. That Persons Excommunicate, and not reforming themselves within three Months, have not every six Months ensuing, been openly Denounced, both in the Parish Church, and the Cathedral of the Diocese where they remain, in such manner as is prescrib'd by the 65th Canon. For want of which Publick and repeated denunciation, the good Ends Proposed in that Canon have been frustrated and the Sentence of Excommunication hath been rendred less awful and effectual than it ought to be.

8. That Commutations of Penance without the Knowledge of the Bishop, and the Fervency of such Commutations, even for slight Sums and in improper Cases, and the private Disposal of the Money thence arising, without notifying the same to the Congregation; are Practices of very Evil Consequences, as they tend greatly to discourage Church-Wardens from presenting Offenders; as they are insufficient for removing the Scandal given to the Church, and for reforming the Persons so allowed to commute; and are plainly repugnant to a Constitution made in the Year 1597, which forbids such Abuses, under the Penalty of three Months Suspension to be inflicted by the Bishop.

9. That the suffering of Persons to instruct Youth, as Tutors or School Masters, without such Licence, from the Ordinary as is requir'd by the Act of Uniformity and the

77th. Canon, hath given Occasion and Encouragement to several ignorant and disaffected Persons to erect Seminaries; wherein not only Academical Learning is pretended to be taught to the Prejudice of the two Universities; but as we are informed and perswaded such Principles are also instilled into Youth, as tend to perpetuate the Schism we now labour under, and to subvert the establish'd Constitution.

10. That Persons have been admitted to be Chancellours or Officials, and as such, to exercise Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, who have not taken any Degree in any University: The Advancement of which Persons, not qualified with Degrees of Schools to Offices of so great Trust and Authority, is, as we conceive, against the true Interest and meaning of the 127th Canon, as well as against the declared Opinion of the Arch-Bishop and Bishops in the Year of our Lord 1571. That, *Quivis Cancellarius, Commissarius & Officialis erit institutus in Legibus Ecclesiasticis & Civilibus, qui in Scholis Doctrina nomine gradum aliquem susceperit*; and doth manifestly tend to the Discouragement of the Study, and Profession of the Civil and Ecclesiastical Laws, to the Prejudice of the Universities, and to the impairing of the Dignity of those Offices.

11. That the Defective Presentments of Church Wardens, and the Connivence of those who by the 26th and the 117th. Canons are empower'd and requir'd to punish such Church-Wardens, as willfully neglect their Duty, have been one great Cause of the present Decay of Church-Discipline and Neglect of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction; and that Church-Wardens have been greatly discouraged from doing their Duty in this Respect, by the Remisness of Ecclesiastical Judges and their Officers, in not prosecuting such matters and Persons, as have at any Time, been presented to them.

12. That the Credit and Influence of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction hath been much impair'd, by the corrupt Practice of Registers in taking (contray to the 135th Canon) *other or greater Fees than such as were certified to the most Reverend the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury in the Year 1597. and by him ratified and approved.* And that great Occasion hath been given to their Exactions in this Point, by the Impunity with which they have been permitted to Transgress the 136th Canon, *Constituting and Appointing that every Register shall place two Tables containing the several Rates and Sums of all the said Fees. One in the usual Place or Consistory where the Court is kept and the other in his Registry; and both of them in such*
sort

sort as that every Person, whom it concerneth, may without Difficulty come to the View and perusal thereof, and take a Copy of them, and that Registers offending against the said Canon, shall be suspended from the Execution of their Office.

13. That the suffering of the Seal of any Jurisdiction, to be kept by any other Person, but either the Judge himself or his lawful Substitute exercising Jurisdiction for him (contrary to the 124th Canon) hath occasioned many clandestine and corrupt Practises whereby Ecclesiastical Judges have been much defrauded, their Authority abused, and the Acts and Proceedings of their Courts defamed and visited. And that like Inconveniencies have happened by sending out Proses of *Quorum Nomina*, without first expressly entring the Names of all such as are thereby to be cited, and a Subscription of the said Proseses and Names by the Judge or his Deputy, which Circumstances are directed and required by the 120th Canon.

14. That many great Inconveniencies have ensued, and may hereafter arise by the Neglect of Registers in not causing all Testaments exhibited into their Offices to be register'd within a convenient Time, according to the Direction given in the 134th Canon, as also by the Non-Observance of the 126th Canon which Orders and Enjoyns that all such Possessors and Exercisers of peculiar Jurisdiction, as have no known, nor certain Registers, nor publick Place to keep their Records in, shall one in every Year exhibit, into the publick Registry of the Bishop of the Diocess, or of the Dean and Chapter, under whose Jurisdiction the said Peculiars are every Original Testament of every Person in that time deceased, and by them proved in their several peculiar Jurisdictions, or a true Copy of every such Testament examined, subscribed, and sealed, by the peculiar Judge and his Notary.

15. That the exacting of Excessive Fees for Collations and Institutions, and particularly the obliging the Clergy at their Institution to pay great and unreasonable Fees to the Bishops for Sequestration, Relaxation, and for the Apparitors laying of both, and afterwards refusing them Induction unless they will pay the same Fees over again to the Arch-Deacons Register; as also the multiplying of Fees for Sequestration and Relaxation, where there are several Chappels of Ease under the one Mother-Church, are a great and very oppressive Burthen upon the Clergy.

16. That from the 137th Canon Concerning Fees to be paid for shewing Letters of Order and other Licences, Occasion hath been taken unnecessarily to multiply Instruments, and to demand of the Clergy at Visitations Fees for more Instruments, than they

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they had or were Bound to exhibite, and contrary to the express Words of that Canon, whole Fees for such Instruments have been demanded and paid, more than once in the time of the same Bishop.

17. That great Trouble and Charge have been occasion'd to several Ministers, thro' the Default and Misbehaviour of Sub-Collectors, and other Officers employed in the receiving the Tenths, who have either demanded and taken arbitrary and excessive Fees, in Discharge of such Tenths, as have not been paid in Time; or in prospect of some undue Advantage, have suffered Tenths to lye long in Arrear, to the Prejudice of succeeding Ministers, who by that neglect stand often charged with the Debts of their Predecessors.

18. That great Encroachments have been made upon the Rights and Possessions of the Church, by the general Neglect of procuring and preserving true Notes and Terriers of Glebe Lands and other Possessions belonging to Churches, as is ordain'd by the 87th Canon.

19. That due Care hath not been taken to observe that Statute (29 Car. 2di. Chap. 8.) which enacts that every Arch-Bishop, Bishop, Dean and Chapter, shall cause every Lease or Grant wherein any Augmentation for the use of any Vicar or Curate is made to be enter'd in a Book of Parchment to be kept by their Registers, and that the said Entry being examined by the respective Arch-Bishop, Bishop, Dean, and Chapter and by them attested in the said Book to be a true Copy, (and that the Augmentation was intended for such Use) shall be as Record, a Copy whereof proved by Witnesses shall be Evidence at Law. For want of which Care many Vicars and Curates may be deprived of the Benefit intended them, by that wholesome and charitable Law.

20. That in some late Editions of the Holy Bible, and of the Liturgy of the Church several gross Errors have been committed.

21. This House had also intended to have offer'd to your Lordships a Representation (long since prepared by their Committee, and which had it not been for your Lordships long Recess would have been timely laid before you) concerning the open Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage, and of the insufferable Liberty there taken, to expose sacred Things and Persons, which hath given just Matter of Scandal and Grief to all serious Christians, and hath been one chief Occasion of that Corruption of Manners and Contempt of Religion which at Present prevail. But they find themselves happily prevented in this Instance by the pious Care of her Majesty in the late
Order

Order given for repressing and restraining such great Enormities for the future. They submit it however to your Lordships great Wisdom, and Godly Concern for Religion, whether this House may not be permitted to join with your Lordships in an Address to her Majesty, expressing our humble Thanks for the seasonable Interposition of her Royal Authority, towards remedying these Licencious Practices, and our earnest Desire and Prayer that it may be effectual throughly to suppress the same.

May it Please your Grace and your Lordships.

THese Articles we Humbly lay before your Lordships, in hopes that some at least of the Grievances therein Represented, may appear to your Lordships (as all of them do to us) worthy of present Deliberation and Redress.

We have chose to offer them in general, without specifying on each Head the particular Facts on which they are grounded; as judging this Method of Application most decent and most agreeable to Ancient Precedents. We shall be ready nevertheless to bring in due Form special Proof of these general Suggestions, wherever it shall be thought wanting, and when ever your Lordships shall be pleased to demand it.

See the Answer to this, Numb. XIX.

Numb. XVII. February 23. 170³/₄.

By the Lower House of Convocation.

Die Mercurii Feb. 23. 170⁴.

Order'd, **T**Hat Mr. Prolocutor, Mr. Dean of Winchester, Dr. Edwards, Dr. Smalridge, and Dr. Atterbury do attend Mr. Speaker of the Honourable House of Commons, and acquaint him that after the Clergies having waited on Her Majesty, with their most Humble Sence of her unexampled Bounty to her poor Clergy, the Lower House of Convocation cannot but take notice, with how much Kindness and Generosity your self, Sir, and the Honourable House of Commons had prevented them, by your Address upon the same Subject, wherein you have been pleased not only to express your readiness to assist and further her Majesties most Charitable Intentions, but so far likewise to espouse the Interest of the Clergy, as to pay your own most hearty thanks on their behalf.

Our House, Sir, Commands me to return their most hearty acknowledgments to you, and to that Honourable House, for this so singular a favour; which you have enlarged by promising to pursue such Methods as may best conduce to the Support, Honour, Interest, and future Security of the Church of *England*, as now by Law Establish'd. And they beg leave at the same time with the most sensible

Gratitude

Gratitude to Profess, that they cannot have any greater assurance of what your Honourable House has now Promised, than the constant experience they have had of what it has always Perform'd.

H. Aldrich, Prolocutor.

For the Reverend Dr. Aldrich, Dean of Christ-Church, and Prolocutor of the Lower House of Convocation.

Reverend Sir,

I Acquainted the House this Day, with what you were pleased to Communicate to me Yesterday from the Lower House of Convocation. I also did Read to the House the Order of Thanks which you left with me, which I am to acquaint you was receiv'd with that Respect and Affection which is justly due to that Reverend and Learned Body of the Clergy. I will not at this time lessen this publick Acknowledgment by any mention of my own personal Zeal and Deference for your House, which upon another occasion will be more properly expressed by,

*My most humble Service
attend those other Reverend
Persons who came
with you last Night.*

*Reverend Sir,
Your most Faithful, and most
Humble Servant,*

R. Harley.

Numb. XVIII. *March 10. 170³₄.*

To the most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Right Reverend the Bishops of the Upper House of Convocation.

May it Please your Grace and your Lordships.

YOur dutiful Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation have been, and still are grieved to find themselves under a necessity of making to your Lordships any Complaints relating to their Rights. Nevertheless the Enjoyment of their Rights is of so high concern to them, and some of those Rights have by late Presidents, been so far endanger'd, that we cannot with safety to the Constitution, be any longer silent concerning them.

We do therefore in behalf of the whole Clergy of the Province, humbly Represent to your Lordships, that as often as a new Parliament and Convocation are call'd, the Deans, Archdeacons, Capitular, and Diocesan Clergy of this Province, have an undoubted Right to be actually Summon'd, not only in Virtue of her Majesty's Writ of Convocation, and of your Grace's Provincial Mandate pursuant thereto, but also according to the Tenor of the Clause *Premunientes* in your Lordships several Parliament Writs; and that notwithstanding this their undoubted Right, the Execution of that Clause upon

upon the Lower Clergy therein concern'd, hath been omitted in many Dioceses, and in one Diocess (that of *Bangor*) her Majesty's Provincial Writ for this present Convocation, and your Graces Mandate in pursuance thereof have not been Executed.

Of these Omissions we think our selves Oblig'd to Complain to your Grace and your Lordships, at this time more especially, because notwithstanding, that the Lord Bishop of *Bangor* hath sat with your Lordship in this present Convocation, yet the Clergy of that Church and Diocess have all the same time been Excluded from their Places and Votes therein: Whereby not only the Lower House hath lost the Assistance of several of its Members; but also the Canons and Constitutions of the Synod (had any such with Royal Licence been made) might, as we conceive, have been of doubtful Authority, and Obligation in the said Church and Diocess. And should so dangerous a Precedent make way for the like Omission in other parts of the Province, it might end in the Subversion of our Constitution.

We do also represent to your Lordships our undoubted Right of having a Prolocutor Chosen, and Admitted at the beginning of every Convocation, and as often as that Office shall become vacant by Death or Promotion.

And further we conceive it to be the Right of our House to assume an Actuary, and to have a convenient place Assign'd for our Debates: And (as we own our selves Oblig'd to Sit when your Lordships shall think fit to Appoint your Sessions, which will we trust be so frequent, for the future, that the Correspondence between the two Houses may not be long interrupted, and thereby the ends of our Synodical Meetings defeated) so we humbly Claim it as our own Right, to dispose of the intermediate time in such manner, as shall to us seem most requisite, for the Preparing and dispatching, on our part, such business as shall either be laid before us, or arise among our selves.

We do moreover Represent it as a Right of this House, and of the Clergy of this Province, that such Vacancies as shall at any time happen by the Death or Promotion of any of our Members, be supply'd in such a way as is suitable to the Laws and Customs of Convocation.

May it Please your Grace and your Lordships.

WE think our selves oblig'd to lay before your Lordships this our humble Representation and Claim, not doubting to obtain such Redress in these Particulars, as is agreeable to Justice, and necessary to support the Ancient and Legal Form, Rights and Liberties of an *English* Convocation.

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Numb.

Numb. XIX. March 17. 1703.

Mr. Prolocutor, and the rest of our Brethren with you.

IT pleased God to Afflict me with a very severe fit of the Gout for several Weeks last past, thereby to confine me in such manner, that I could not attend the Publick Business, either in Parliament, or Convocation, or consider it so duly in private as the Nature of it requir'd.

As soon as my Indisposition would permit, I perus'd the Paper brought up by you on the 11th of February, Intitl'd, *The Humble Representation of the Lower House.*

That Paper was not Read on that Memorable Day, the time being with so great Reason taken up in Forming and Presenting an Address of Thanks to her Majesty, for removing (so far as in her lies) a burthen under which the Poor Clergy have so long labour'd.

But on the next Synodical Day, your Representation was Read before my Substitute, and the rest of my Suffragans then with him, and Order has been given for the making out Copies both for the present and absent Bishops, who, I trust, will make the proper use of it at all times, and especially in their Visitations, and will also call upon their respective Archdeacons to do all that is in their power, in theirs (the returns of which are much more frequent than those of the Bishops) to give them further Information, and to Redress Abuses as far as may be.

As soon as my Health is a little better Establish'd (and I assure you it is very far from that at present) I shall speak to you somewhat largely about your Representation, and in the mean time I heartily Recommend you to the Protection of God.

Numb. XX. December 1. 1704.

May it Please your Grace and your Lordships.

IT is not without exceeding Grief, that we have found a general Complaint amongst all who wish well to Our Church, and especially amongst the Clergy, whom we Represent, that notwithstanding the Convocations of this Province, have after a long Discontinuance, been for some Years last past, duly and regularly held, yet the Publick hath not hitherto reapt thereby any of those Benefits which might reasonably be expected from them.

We are deeply sensible that a Complaint of this kind doth not only cast a Reproach upon your Lordships, and upon us, but doth also tend to the Disparagement of the Constitution of this Church, and gives Occasion to some Slandrous and Evil disposed Persons to utter rash and unsound Speeches against the necessity and usefulness of Ecclesiastical Synods.

We

We therefore think it our indispensable Duty, to do whatever in us lies, for the Time to come, in order to silence that Complaint, which we have constantly and earnestly endeavour'd for the Time past to prevent. For we beg leave to observe to your Lordships, that whatever blame the whole Convocation may lie under for having made so little progress in Business relating to the Publick good of the Church, yet the Clergy of the lower House have all along made such Advances therein, that they have been rather accused of being too forward than censur'd for their Remissness.

A greater Progress had without doubt been made in the dispatch of publick Business, had it not been interrupted by the unhappy disputes between the two Houses, concerning the Manner of Synodical Proceedings. And we should think our Selves justly chargable with all the Evil Consequences of those Disputes, if our Conferences did not bear the Testimony, that we neither rais'd them, nor after their rise, omitted any means which we could possibly contrive for bringing them to a regular Determination.

We had Hopes that all differences between the two Houses about Forms would more easily and sooner be compos'd, if both entered upon Business of that weight and Moment, as it might justly be conceived all the Fathers and Sons of the Church would unanimously promote: And the lower House would with Gladness have received any Directions, which your Lordships in your great Wisdom should have been pleas'd to have given them for the good of this Church: But when nothing of this kind was offer'd to them by your Lordship's, your Clergy thought they might, without being guilty of too great Presumption, make their humble Applications about such matters to your Lordships.

They did accordingly some Years since lay before your Lordships several Positions (extracted out of a Book Entitl'd *Christianity not Mysterious*, and bearing the Name of J. Toland) which they judg'd to be dangerous, pernicious, scandalous and destructive of the Christian Faith, and did pray your Lordships Concurrence with their Resolutions, together with your Advice and Directions what effectual Course might be taken to suppress pernicious Books, written against the Truth of the Christian Religion, and so to prevent the Publication of the like for the future; your Lordships were not pleas'd hereupon to declare to the lower House your Opinions concerning the Positions presented to you, or concerning the Book in which they were contain'd which was at the same time laid before your Lordships, or to give your Clergy the Advice and Directions which they humbly pray'd.

After this several other Books were published of the like pernicious Nature and tendency, and it manifestly appear'd that the Adversaries of our Holy Faith were so far from being deterr'd,

that

that they proceeded to Vent their impious Opinions with greater assurance and licentiousness. The Lower House in this Convocation did in all humble manner remind your Lordships of this daring liberty of the Press, through which several ungodly Books were still dispersed, and did then more particularly point at a Scandalous Book in which the Immortality of the Souls of Men was openly denied; but sufficient notice was not taken of such Books, by reason whereof the Honourable House of Commons brought this Matter under their Cognizance; and passed a censure upon one of the Books by your Clergy complain'd of, to the great Honour of that Body, and not without reproach upon the Convocation then sitting. The Clergy of the lower House found no Success from these their reiterated Addresses to your Lordships, who had been pleased to acquaint them, that upon consulting Council learned in the Law, concerning Heretical, Impious, and Immoral Books, you could not find how, without a Royal Licence you had sufficient Authority to censure judicially any such Books; Wherefore tho' they were fully satisfied that Your Lordships might have complied with their desires without a Royal Licence, or might have obtain'd a Licence if requisite, yet they were unwilling to press your Lordships any farther upon that head, and went on to lay before your Lordships other matters, in which there could be no doubt but your Lordships might interpose your Episcopal Authority without the intervention of a Royal Licence. They did therefore humbly present to your Lordship several Articles of Grievances, in hopes that some of them at least would appear to your Lordships, as all of them did to them, worthy of present Deliberation and Redress, your Grace was pleased to acquaint them; That an order had been given for making out Copies of that Representation, both for the present and absent Bishops, who your Grace trusted would make the proper Use of them at all times, and especially at their Visitations, and would also call upon their respective Arch-Deacons, to do all that was in their Power, in Theirs, to give them farther Information, and to redress abuses as far as may be. Your Clergy shall very much rejoice to be informed by your Lordships, that such Use hath been made as your Grace trusted would be of that Representation, and shall be very thankful to your Lordships for what they shall learn hath been done by your Lordships for the Redress of those Abuses, and if any thing remains further to be done therein Synodically, the lower House will gladly join with your Lordships in so good and necessary a Work, as having no other End in their View, but a Reformation of such things as are amiss, utterly detesting from their Hearts any such sinister Intention as they have been unjustly charged with, of bringing an *Odium* upon your Lordships, by the Representation they made;

made; for which false uncharitable surmise no Ground was given, either by the matter or manner of that Representation.

Your Clergy do with all Duty submit to the Consideration of these things to your Lordships Godly Wisdom, and do most earnestly beseech your Lordships, that you would exert your Pastoral vigilance and zeal for rescuing Convocations from that Contempt into which they are in danger of falling, if they should be wholly useless to the Church and State: And that in order thereunto, your Lordships would condescend to impart to your Clergy the Result of your Lordships wise Consultations, about what may Legally and Properly be done by this Synod for the Honour of Religion, and for the Maintenance of the Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline of this Church, and would also candidly receive from your Clergy such dutiful Applications, as they shall from time to time make to your Lordships for those good purposes.

1. At present we think our selves Oblig'd to Repeat to your Lordships a Motion formerly made by this House, concerning a Bill for the more Easy and Speedy Recovery of Church Rates: We judge it highly requisite that such a Bill shall be Drawn, and Offer'd in Parliament, in order to move the Objections raised against the present Methods of Levying Church Rates in some Cases, and satisfy the just Expectations of those who prevented the Passing of a former Bill to this purpose, of dangerous Consequence to the Liberties of the Church Immemorially Enjoy'd, and Solemnly declar'd in the Statute of *Circumspecte Agatis*.

We therefore pray your Lordships, that some of our House (having Jurisdiction) may be permitted to join with your Lordships in preparing the Heads of such a Bill as may redress the Grievance complain'd of, without impairing the Authority of the Church in that behalf.

And we think such a Bill at this time to be the more necessary, because of the great Damage done to several Churches of this Province by the late dreadful Storm.

2. We do also beg leave again to take Notice of the many Evil and Pernicious Books which are Publish'd, and industriously Diffus'd to the Dishonour of God, and the great Scandal of this Church, and we do with all Humility and Earnestness repeat that Request which we have formerly made to your Lordships, that you would be Pleas'd to take this Matter into your most Serious and Paternal Consideration, and use your Interest in Parliament for Passing a Bill against the Licentiousness of the Press.

We do further Represent to your Lordships, That there are, and encrease daily many difficulties upon the Parochial Clergy, about Administering the Holy Sacrament indifferently to all Persons who demand it, in order to qualifie themselves for Offices (as is requir'd by several

several good and wholesome Laws, which are very necessary for the perpetual Establishment and Security of our Church) because we see not how we can in several cases Act conformably to the Rubricks and Canons of the Church, in repelling such Persons as are unworthy, and particularly notorious Schismatics, without exposing our selves to Vexatious and Expensive Suits at Law. We therefore most humbly beseech your Lordships, in Tenderneſs to the Clergy, over whom God has made you Overseers, to imploy your Interest for the freeing us from these difficulties, and in the mean time to give us your Paternal Directions, how you think it fit we should behave our selves under such Exigences.

Numb. XXI. December 15. 1704.

Were Passed the two following Papers, which for want of Opportunity were not deliver'd till Feb. 14. 1705.

THE Lower Clergy beg leave to represent to your Grace, and your Lordships, that among many other Encroachments of the Dissenting Teachers upon the Office, and the Rights of the Clergy, their frequent presuming to Administer the Holy Sacrament of Baptism in private Non-Licenc'd Houses, is one great Abuse of very Evil Consequence, no ways as we conceive Warranted or Countenanced by the Act for *Exempting Protestant Subjects Dissenting from the Church of England, from the Penalties of certain Laws, &c.* commonly call'd the Act of Toleration. We humbly therefore pray, That your Lordships would be pleas'd to take this matter into your Grave and Wise Consideration, and endeavour by all proper means to put a stop to all such bold Intrusions upon the Rules and Discipline of the Church, by Law Establish'd.

We cannot without great concern Observe how the Numbers of Non-Licenced Schools and Seminaries are multiply'd, and the dangers arising from them daily encrease, and under a deep Sence of what may be the fatal Consequence of such irregular Societies, as give no Security to Church or State, and which we have reason to believe, are labouring the Subversion of both, we think it our Duty at this time most earnestly to beseech your Lordships, that you would please to use your utmost Authority and Interest for the Suppressing such Seminaries, and thereby prevent the Growth of Popery, Schism, and Sedition.

May it Please your Grace and your Lordships.

WE the Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation, have found our selves, more than once, under the unwelcome necessity of laying before your Lordships our Complaints against the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of *Sarum*: And as unwilling as we are to multiply Complaints, yet we are now again compell'd to it by a very grie-

vous and groundless Aspersions, wherewith the said Right Reverend Bishop hath lately thought fit to load us; and which we might seem in some measure to have deserv'd, should we continue silent under it.

The Representation of Grievances, which we offer'd to your Lordships last Winter, was, as we humbly conceive, drawn up in a very In-offensive and Respectful manner, and had accordingly a very favourable Reception and Answer from your Grace; and yet from this Paper, the aforesaid Right Reverend Bishop hath taken an Occasion, no ways given him, plainly to Insinuate, if not to Affirm, that *many of the Persons concern'd in preparing it, are Enemies to your Lordships, the Queen, and the Nation.* This reproachful Character his Lordship first gave of them to the Clergy of his Diocess, and hath since, even while we were Assembled in Synod, Publish'd to the World.

We thank God we are not Conscious that this high Accusation doth, in any branch of it, or in any measure, belong to us.

We are so far from being Enemies to your Lordships, that we have ever accounted the Enemies, or false Friends of Episcopacy, to be, for that reason, ours. We have been Taught from our very Infancy to reverence your Order, and do reverence even the Bishop, against whom we now Complain, for the sake of it.

We have been always firmly and zealously devoted to her Majesty's Interest, even before She Ascended the Throne, and have since that, receiv'd from her such Unparallel'd Marks of Royal Favour and Bounty, that we should be the most Disloyal of Subjects, and the Unworthiest of Men, should we not make her all the returns of Duty and Gratitude that are possible, and to our utmost Contribute towards rendering her Reign (what our constant Prayers to God are, that it may long continue to be) Easy, Prosperous, and Glorious.

And as to our being Enemies to the Nation, we know not what part of the Charge was particularly design'd to Insinuate, but sure we are, that, as we were all of us Born, and Bred up in it, so we have, and shall ever preserve true English Hearts, and English Principles, suitable to our Birth and Education.

We therefore being in our humble Opinion, thus Openly Aspersed by undistinguishing Reflections cast on many of our Members, and by that means on our House, and the whole Clergy of the Province, do, in the first place, as becomes us, apply our selves unto your Grace and your Lordships, beseeching you so effectually to interpose your Authority and Influence, that the said Right Reverend Bishop be Oblig'd, either as openly to Disclaim any such intended Meaning, or otherways to make some sufficient and speedy Reparation to your much Injur'd Complainants.

Numb. XXII. Feb. 14. 1704. *The President said;*

Mr. Prolocutor.

I Have heard it said in the Lower House of Convocation, there has been held one or more intermediate Sessions, since the last Synodical Day. I desire to know the Truth of this Matter.

The Prolocutor answered,

That they held one last Monday.

The President said.

This is very irregular, and I do therefore admonish you to hold no more such intermediate Session, as being a Violation of the Presidents Right, and contrary to the constant Custom of Convocation.

Feb. 23. 1705.

The Prolocutor said.

May it please your Grace and your Lordships. Your Lordships last Paper was read and considered in the lower House, and they have directed me to return this their Answer.

WE have, as we are in Duty oblig'd, taken your Graces Admonition into our most serious Consideration: And having maturely weighed, what is now objected to us, and what the Practice has been in former Convocations, we find our selves oblig'd with all dutiful respect to represent to your Grace, that we have not, as we conceive, been guilty of any Irregularity by our last intermediate Session; and that the holding of such Sessions by the lower House of Convocation, as oft as they shall see Cause, is no Violation of the most Reverend the Presidents Right; nor is it contrary to the Custom of Convocations, but an unquestionable Right of the Clergy of the lower House, and from which we cannot depart. This with all Duty we return in answer to your Graces Paternal Admonition, for as such we take it.

But if as hath been suggested (tho' we scarce know how to believe a thing so unexampled) the Admonition was intended as Judicial; we then crave Liberty in behalf of our Selves and the Clergy whom we represent, to protest, as we think we are bound to do, and accordingly we do protest, against it, as Void, and Null, and of no Effect in Law, and to which no Obedience can be due.

We humbly beseech your Grace and your Lordships, that this our Answer and Protestation may be enter'd, in Form by your Register in the Acts of this Day. For which Protestation we are ready to Assign our Reasons, if your Grace and your Lordships shall think fit to require them.

FINIS.

THere is just publish'd, A Continuation of the Faithful Account of what past in Convocation, in a Fourth Letter to a Friend.

